

NABLC Safety Advisor

December 2003



Holiday Safety



Holiday Travel! — PRE-TRIP SAFETY CHECKLIST

The Naval Safety Center has posted on their website a checklist designed to be completed for all planned trips outside the local area when service members are going on leave/liberty. Its use is encouraged when service members are going on trips even if not on official leave/liberty. It will help service members, commanders, and other leaders ensure drivers and vehicles are safe prior to departure and that the trip has been sufficiently planned (time, rest stops, alternate drivers, anticipated weather conditions) to get safely to the destination and back.

<http://safetycenter.navy.mil/ashore/motorvehicle/toolbox/pre-tripsafe.htm>

CPSC Chairman Warns Holiday Shoppers about Hazardous Recalled Toys -- New Federal Web Site Launched -- www.Recalls.gov

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Chairman Hal Stratton today (November 25, 2003) warned holiday season gift buyers to be on the lookout for recently recalled toys and children's products that pose serious safety threats to youngsters. To provide consumers easier access to all recall announcements, Chairman Stratton also announced the launch of a new federal government inter-agency Web site -- www.Recalls.gov.

"Before purchasing or giving any gift, particularly one intended for a child, double-check to make sure it does not pose a hazard," Stratton said. "Visit CPSC's Web site to determine if it has been recalled. Another option is to go to the easy-to-remember Web address www.Recalls.gov. It's a 'one-stop shop' for the latest information on all federal government recalls."

The new www.Recalls.gov site provides links to all federal agencies with statutory authority to issue recalls, including CPSC, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Visitors can easily find information about all federal government recalls -- regardless of the jurisdiction of the agency or the nature of the recall.

"We're confident visitors will find www.Recalls.gov to be a convenient portal to important safety information covering consumer goods, automobiles, boats, drugs, cosmetics and environmental products," Stratton said. "I want to thank our federal partners, including the General Services Administration, which manages www.firstgov.gov, for their cooperation. I also want to acknowledge many corporate and trade association partners for their efforts to make Americans aware of www.Recalls.gov. By working together, we can save countless lives and prevent injuries," Stratton said.

While considering product safety when shopping for new gift items, Stratton also urged Americans to examine older toys and products in their possession that can pose hazards. He urged operators of daycare centers and thrift stores to be especially vigilant in removing previously recalled items such as older baby cribs, baby walkers, and high chairs from their premises.

Consumers can get the list of recalled toys and children's products by going to the CPSC Web site, www.cpsc.gov, or by calling toll-free (800) 638-2772.

The following safety tips will help consumers choose appropriate toys:



- * Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills, and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards to younger children.
 - * For infants, toddlers, and all children who still mouth objects, avoid toys with small parts, which could pose a fatal choking hazard.
 - * Look for sturdy construction on plush toys, such as tightly secured eyes, noses, and other potential small parts.
 - * Avoid toys that have sharp edges and points, especially for children under age 8.
-
- * Do not purchase electric toys with heating elements for children under age 8.
 - * Be a label reader. Look for labels that give age and safety recommendations and use that information as a guide.
 - * Check instructions for clarity. They should be clear to you, and when appropriate, to the child.
 - * Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys before they become deadly playthings. Plastic wrappings can cause suffocation.

Decorate Safely for the Holidays

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reminds consumers that the holiday season should be merry and bright, not dangerous. Avoiding hazards such as dried out Christmas trees, unsafe lights and unattended burning candles could prevent thousands of injuries.

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, there are 11,600 candle-related fires each year, resulting in 150 deaths, 1200 injuries and \$173 million in property loss annually. Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries and an average of more than \$10 million in property loss and damage.

CPSC suggests following these tips to make your holiday a safe one:

Trees:



- * When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- * When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- * When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

Lights:



- * Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
- * Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.



- * Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.

- * Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

- * Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.

- * Stay away from power or feeder lines leading from utility poles into older homes.

- * Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).

- * Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

- * Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights - they could unravel and inadvertently wrap around power lines.

- * Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

Decorations:



- * Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.

- * Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.

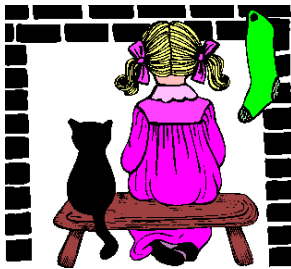
- * In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

- * Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass

"angel hair."

- * Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

Fireplaces:



- * Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.

- * Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

Get a free brochure with more holiday decorating safety tips at CPSC's web site: www.cpsc.gov.

*Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season
from
the NABLC Safety Storefront Staff*